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THE
HERITAGE OF PEACE;
OR,
CHRIST OUR LIFE.

BY
T. S. CHILDS, D. D.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.”

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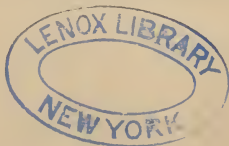
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TO

WALTER LOWRIE,

UNDER WHOSE ROOF THE AUTHOR FOUND

The Heritage of Peace,

AND TO WHOM HE OWES WHATEVER

SON OR BROTHER CAN OWE,

THESE PAGES

ARE

GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.



I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I
might live unto God. I am crucified with
Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I,
but Christ liveth in me, and the life
which I now live in the flesh,
I live by the faith of the
Son of God, who loved
me, and gave Himself
for me.



THE HERITAGE OF PEACE.

CHAPTER I.

DEATH BY THE LAW : CONDEMNATION.

NOWHERE, probably, is there a more comprehensive statement of the sum of the Christian doctrine and the Christian life than the Apostle has left on record in his Epistle to the Galatians :¹ I through the law am ¹ Gal. ii. 19, 20. dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. These verses explain

and complete each other. To the question, How through the law he was dead to the law, the Apostle answers : I am crucified with Christ. To the inquiry, how he lives unto God, he replies : Christ liveth in me. Here is the whole mystery of the Christian life—a life which begins in death and issues in perfect peace and final glory.

The first and most important inquiry here is, How can a man die to the law ? To be dead to law is to be free from it, to be like a dead man to it, or to have it become a dead law whose force and penalty have expired. Upon a Jew, like the Apostle, the law rested in a twofold form—the moral and ceremonial. Both forms were of Divine authority. From neither, therefore, could there be deliverance except by the same authority. And yet there must be deliverance if there is to be acceptance with God. For on the one hand, by the works of the law no flesh can be justified ;¹ and, on the other, the law can never, with sacrifices which are

¹ Rom. iii. 20 ;

Gal. ii. 16.

offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.¹ No man can be saved by his obedience to the moral law; and no sacrifices of the ceremonial law can atone for his sins.

Now it hardly need be said here that the ceremonial law died when Christ died. Freedom from it, therefore, was obtained through Him to whom it pointed and by whom it was fulfilled. Guided by the law itself, the believing Jew became dead to it when he found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote.² The appearance of the great High Priest who came in the power of an endless life set free the worshipper from the services which stood in the law of a carnal commandment.³ By the law he died to the law that he might live unto God.

There were profounder questions connected with the moral law. It had no typical office.

¹ Heb. x. 1.

² John i. 45.

³ Heb. vii. 16.

It was no shadowy, temporary institution. Resting on the very nature of Jehovah, abrogation or change is impossible. It belongs to no time, to no dispensation. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, is an obligation extending wherever there are hearts and souls and minds, in heaven, and earth, and hell. From this there is no release except by annihilation; and annihilation is not a fact known to us in the universe of God. The consciousness of this obligation, in some form, is universal. The conviction of ill-desert, where the obligation has been violated, is equally universal. There is no soul so sunken in ignorance, or so debased by sin, as not to recognize itself as under law, and exposed to punishment for wrong-doing. It is this which gives the truths of Revelation such tremendous power over human hearts. They answer to all that lies hidden in the terrible depths of depravity there. They bring to light the hidden things

of darkness, and reveal the counsels of the heart.¹ No man, therefore, can ¹ 1 Cor. iv. 5. remain long face to face with these truths. He will either turn from them and seek in oblivion to escape them, or he will cry out in anguish, "What must I do to be saved."

The facts of sin, and the inherent ill-desert of sin, are among the first truths of a sound philosophy as well as of a true theology. If sin exists, it must be punished. The necessity lies both in its own nature and in the nature of God. The guilt of sin does not rest upon its results, upon its injury to the Divine government, nor upon its general effect upon the universe. It is embedded in its own nature. If all evil consequences were, by an act of omnipotence, checked the moment the sin was committed, this would not change the nature of the sin nor reverse the necessity and justice of its condemnation and curse. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed

upon all men, because all have sinned.¹ ¹ Rom. v. 12.

Without entering into any questions of disputed interpretation in regard to this passage, the simple point about which there can be no dispute is the connection made between sin and death. "Death passed upon all." Why? Upon what ground is so terrible a fact based? From the consequences of the transgression? From considerations of general policy? For governmental purposes? For the moral impression on the universe? No. Death passed upon all because *all have sinned*. This is the simple and the sufficient reason. It was because sin, wherever found, deserves death. The wages of sin is death. It is, indeed, a fearful thought, and one that invests the question of death to the law with awful gloom, that "every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come."

As sin deserves the curse in its own nature, so it must receive the curse from the nature of God.

Justice is not an incidental part of the Divine nature. It is not—we say it reverently—a voluntary form of the manifestation of that nature. It is an essential attribute of Godhead. We can conceive of God without grace, that is, without that attribute which leads Him to bless and save the sinful. But we cannot conceive of Him without justice. Leave out of your conceptions the thought of absolute and eternal justice, and you have lost the very idea of God. The results that flow from the exercise of justice are no more to be confounded with the attribute itself than the effects of the lightning-flash are to be identified with the lightning itself. That the manifestation of Divine justice does have a moral effect upon those before whom it is manifested is undoubtedly true. The voice of much people in heaven cries: Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments. And yet again they cry Alleluia, when the smoke of

the torment riseth up forever and
¹ Rev. xix. 1-3. ever.¹ The solemn vindictory judgments of God are the ground of unspeakable awe and adoration on the part of His saints ; but their awe and adoration are not the ground of His judgments. He does not inflict His appalling and eternal wrath upon one part of His creation for the sake of its moral effect upon another part. He punishes sin because it deserves it, and because His essential justice necessitates it. It is true that God is Love. It is no less true that He is Light. As it is the nature of light to repel darkness, so it is the nature of God that repels sin. In this sense evil cannot dwell with Him : the wicked cannot
² Ps. v. 4, 5. stand in His sight.²

To suppress the strict justice of God, to resolve His character into indiscriminating love, is not only an offence against truth, leading logically to very low and unworthy conceptions of God, but is fraught with infinite peril to men as it

touches on the question of their standing before God and the conditions of reconciliation with Him. While we rejoice that He has proclaimed Himself the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, we are not to forget that He has, in the same proclamation, declared that He

will by no means clear the guilty.¹ ¹ Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.

We may not forget that He who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, renders indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul that

doeth evil.² He who comes from ² John iii. 16 ;
Rom. ii. 8, 9.

Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save, treads the people in His anger, and tramples them in His fury, and sprinkles their blood upon His garments, and stains all His raiment. For the day of vengeance is in His heart, when the year of His redeemed

is come.³ What God hath joined ³ Isa. lxiii. 1-4

together let no man put asunder. Mercy and truth go before Him, but justice and judgment are the habitation (margin, *establishment*,) of His throne.¹

It is the conception of these two truths—the inherent ill-desert of sin, and the essential justice of God—that wraps the soul in darkness as it contemplates its relation to God and to the judgment to come. With religion or without it, no man can wholly divest himself of the gloomy consciousness of sin. The fact is too personal, too profound, too thoroughly pervading his whole nature. Over this sin hangs a law as just, as necessary, as inflexible as the nature of God. The wages of sin is death.²

² Rom vi. 23. The soul that sinneth it shall die.³

³ Ezek. xviii. 4. The sinner then must die. His sin must receive its desert. Justice must be met and its claims exhausted. The truth of God must stand. Before the law can pass away from man and release him, he must die beneath it.

Why, then, do we speak of *life*? What is the meaning of these hopes and songs of immortality that throb in the heart of a lost humanity? What are these anticipations of the resurrection and the life which fill so many weary and heavy-laden spirits treading in tears the sorrowful pathway of life, and passing in triumph the valley of the shadow of death? How from out this gloom of sin and death have life and immortality been brought to light? The whole of this sublime mystery is unfolded by the Apostle; not by denying the fact of sin or its just desert; not by denying the awful justice of God, or the certainty of its operation even to the last and darkest element of death; but, affirming both, he shows how the sinner may pass with his sins under the wrath of God, under the curse of the law, may stand there, and die there, and come forth to the resurrection of life. He shows how the sinner may perfectly suffer all the penalty of his sins, and having exhausted that penalty, go forth in

newness of life to live without fear unto God forevermore. I, through the law, am dead to the law that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live.

There are two ways in which, by all language and usage, a person may do a thing. He may do it himself or he may do it through another. It is a common maxim of law that what one does through another he does himself. The agent who pays my debt acts for me. The law accounts it my act and discharges me. I, by the law, am dead to the law. By a well-recognized principle of law, in its perfect and regular operation, and not by its abrogation, I am set free from its claims, because; in the person of another, I have met those claims and satisfied them.

We do not, therefore, appeal to something foreign to human conceptions and customs when we say there are two ways, and only two, in which the penalty of the law for sin may be met.

In some form the sinner must die. In a real

and true sense the death must be *his* death. The claim of the law is upon him, and, if satisfied, it must be in such form as shall allow a perfect vindication. Before it releases the sinner, the law must be able to point to him and say, "He is dead." There are, we repeat, two ways in which a sinner can thus die: the first is in his own person; the second is in the person of another. If he dies in his own person, he perishes hopelessly; for he goes down to the grave bound to the body of sin as well as to the curse of the law. He enters a tomb from which no angel shall descend to roll away the stone—no voice of the Son of God shall call to the resurrection of life. He has undertaken to bear for himself the whole tremendous curse of sin. He has staggered on, in the weakness of humanity, to prove whether his heart can endure and his hands be strong in the day when God shall deal with him. And with a strength that breaks down under the first falling shadows of a coming wrath, he plunges into the

dark abyss to bear, in eternal weakness, the eternal curse—to know all the force of the fearful words of Him who has the keys of death and of hell: The worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. This is one way in which a sinner may die to the law—justly, utterly, forever.

The other way is that which infinite love has provided in the person of another. One has been found who, not subject to the curse of sin in His own person, has been pleased to stand in the place of those who were thus subject; to put His life in the place of their lives, to be used in the sinless service of the law, to be sacrificed as a penalty to the law. God has sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons.¹

¹ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

It is this that opens the door of hope to those bound by sin, by the law, by the terrors

of death. Into the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free, the sinner comes through the death he dies in Christ. Redemption by the blood of the Lamb! It is this that is proclaimed as the highest of earthly boons, the answer to the intensest yearnings of our humanity. Do we receive it? Justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we receive it? Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.¹ ¹Rom. viii. 38, 39.

CLING to the Crucified !
His death is life to thee,—

Life for eternity.

His pains thy pardon seal ;

His stripes thy bruises heal ;

His Cross proclaims thy peace,

Bids every sorrow cease.

His blood is all to thee :

It purges thee from sin ;

It sets thy spirit free ;

It keeps thy conscience clean.

Cling to the Crucified !

Cling to the Crucified !

His is a heart of love,

Full as the hearts above ;

Its depths of sympathy

Are all awake for thee :

His countenance is light,

Even to the darkest night.

That love shall never change ;

That light shall ne'er grow dim :

Charge thou thy faithless heart

To find its all in Him.

Cling to the Crucified ! HORATIUS BONAR.



If one died for all, then were all dead.



CHAPTER II.

DEATH WITH CHRIST : DELIVERANCE.

I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST. These are remarkable words. How was he who uttered them crucified with Christ? Was he one of those who hung by the Redeemer's side in the anguish of His bitter death? If Paul was present at all in the scenes of the Saviour's crucifixion, he was present as a Pharisee of the Pharisees to swell the cry: Crucify Him! crucify Him! By his own confession we may believe that no man had more bitterly hated the Person, or more fiercely opposed the doctrine of Christ than he. What, then, does he mean by the assertion, I am crucified with Christ? and by the further and more

mysterious assertion, Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me? Dead, yet living. Living, yet not living; bearing about not his own but another's life within him! There is here, somewhere, a marvellous mystery and transformation. What is it? and what is its ground? The ground—and we touch it at once, for it explains the mystery of all Christian life—is the union of Christ and His people.

That there is such a union is one of the most precious and far-reaching facts of Revelation. It opens the whole system of grace. It floods with glorious light multitudes of otherwise dark and inexplicable passages of inspiration. It teaches the meaning of such words as these: Ye in me, and I in you; Christ in you, the hope of glory; of God are ye in Christ; sanctified in Christ Jesus; chosen in Him; abide in me and I in you.

It explains while it justifies the beautiful imagery: I am the vine, ye are the branches.¹ Ye are built upon the

¹ John xv. 5.

foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.¹ As the body is one, and hath many members; so also is Christ.² It explains, also, and gives fearful force to the vindications of the last day: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me: Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.³

¹ Eph. ii. 20.

² 1 Cor. xii. 12.

³ Mat. xxv. 40, 45.

The operation of the work of Christ is such as has its explanation only in this union. It finds its analogy and type in the law under which sin reigns unto death. For as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.⁴ It was not without both ground and effect that the Redeemer, standing in the gathering shadows

⁴ Rom. v. 18

of Gethsemane and Calvary, offered the mysterious prayer: That they all may be one, as thou,

Father, art in me, and I in thee, that

¹ John xvii. 21. they also may be one in us.¹ It is

not without reason that the Holy

Ghost has declared, in language which no believer would have dared use, had it not been used for, and in reference to, all believers in

Christ: Ye are members of his

² Eph. v. 30. body, of his flesh and of his bones.²

Stronger language could not be found to express the fact that, in some profound and mysterious sense the believer and Christ are one.

The depth of all this language is not exhausted by saying that it teaches a union of thought, feeling and will, such as may exist among men. It does this, but it does far more. It points to a union infinitely more profound and sacred than this. The Church has expressed this union in harmony with the Scriptures by saying that the

believer and Christ are one both federally and spiritually. They are one as Adam and his race were one, in covenant and law;¹ and they are one by the indwelling in the believer of the same personal Spirit that dwells in Christ.

In the eternal covenant and purpose of God, all His people—the hundred and forty and four thousand of Israel, with the multitude that no man can number of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues—were contemplated as one with the Son of God. They were chosen in Him. They were given to be in Him federally, spiritually, eternally. In the mystery of the Incarnation, and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, they become one with Him in a union of which the nearest earthly relations are faint emblems. They are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

In virtue of this union what Christ, as the head of His people, did, what He suffered, what

He accomplished, they are regarded as having done, suffered and accomplished.

Now the mission of Christ was emphatically a mission under law. His assumption of humanity was the assumption of a nature which was under law ; His coming was a coming under law ; His life was a life under the law ; His death was a death by the law. The sacrifices of the old dispensation, which had all their significance in Christ, were sacrifices to law ; purifications and oblations, rituals and ceremonies, priesthood and priestly functions, ordained until the coming of a better mediator, were all by law. It is not, therefore, without a deep and solemn meaning that the Apostle says: When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them

that were under the law, that we
¹ Gal. iv. 4, 5. might receive the adoption of sons.¹

This brings before us at once and clearly the relation of the work of Christ to His people.

The Redeemer came into the world under no obligations besides those which He voluntarily took upon Himself. He came to stand, to live, to act, to die, as one representing many. In the first Adam the race had had a probation. They had fallen and passed under the curse. In Christ, as the second Adam, God, in infinite grace, granted his chosen people a second probation by which, and by which alone, their final standing and destiny were to be decided. The Son of God in His Incarnation, gathered up, as it were, into one person, the whole covenant people. He passed with them under the law, meeting every demand of it; He passed with them into the grave, suffering the full penalty of it; He came forth with them from the tomb, forever free from it, as the power of death. When Christ rendered perfect obedience to the law of God, it was, in the eye of God, precisely as if the believer in Christ had himself rendered it. When Christ suffered death, the penalty of the law, it was as

if the believer had died, and so died as to satisfy the law which binds death to every sin.

Now this law, which is thus perfectly and forever met by each believer, is the law from which all his fears and anxieties come. It is the law that is burdened with gloom, because burdened with death. But if the law is to you really extinct; if you have done all it requires; if you have loved the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind, and your neighbor as yourself; or if, failing this, you have suffered all the penalty which the law has to inflict for transgression, are you not satisfied? Has the law any longer any terror for you? Has it any claim which you have not already paid? Has it any curse which you have not already endured? Can it demand anything more of you for your acceptance with God? Can it inflict anything more upon you as a curse of sin?

If you had already done and endured all this in your own person you would have no doubt.

If you had perfectly obeyed the Divine law, you would have no anxiety as to the love of God towards you. If, after disobedience, you had fully suffered all the law required for your sins, you would have no further fear of its curse. But is *your* person more precious than that of the Son of God? Are your obedience and your suffering a better ground of confidence and peace than the obedience and suffering of the Divine Redeemer? Do you think God would be better pleased with your satisfaction to His law than with that of His own Son? O believer, if your sinless life could satisfy the law, and open for you the gates of heaven, and bear you home fearlessly to the bosom of God, what shall not the sinless life of God's only-begotten Son do for you? If your suffering the penalty of the law could bring peace to your conscience, and the assurance of deliverance from future wrath, how much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to

God, purge your conscience from
¹ Heb. ix. 14. dead works to serve the living God? ¹

For if believers and Christ are one, when Christ fulfilled the law, they fulfilled it; when He died they died; and when token was given, by the resurrection from the dead, that the atonement was accepted and the work of reconciliation finished, then an everlasting righteousness was brought in which is unto all and upon all them that believe. Where Christ is there also must His people be. In the eye of God they were with Him before the foundations of the world were laid; they were with Him when He bowed the heavens and came down and the darkness of the Incarnation was under His feet; they were with Him as through toil and tears and love unknown, He fulfilled all righteousness; they were with Him when the cup of His Father's wrath was put into His hand; they were baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with; they stood with Him in the gar-

den ; they hung with Him on the Cross ; they suffered with Him there the whole dread penalty of sin ; and when the Redeemer bowed His head it was finished. The chosen of God of every age, and clime, and name, had met the law and satisfied it. They had received its full and awful power of death, and now for them it is rolled together as a scroll. They can suffer its curse no more, for they have suffered it, and it is passed forever. Death itself to them is dead.

When Christ, on the morning of the third day, stepped from the grave, free from the law and from its curse forever, He brought forth in His arms His ransomed church. Behind Him, and behind them, He left the law in the tomb. Over its silent form — silent because satisfied — He passed in the power of an endless life. Through the law He had died to the law to live evermore unto God. Planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. We are buried with Him by bap-

tism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.¹ If we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.² This is not only the obligatory, but it is the necessary result. No man can die with Christ without also living with Him and for Him. If, in Him, we are dead to the law, we are dead to it, not to live unto sin, but unto God. We are indeed no longer under the law which says: Do this *and* live; but we are under the law which says: Do this *because* ye live: not the law which says: Love and obey in order to be saved; but, love and obey because you have been saved. This answers the objection that the gospel, thus viewed,

is the minister of sin. It meets the perversions and misrepresentations so often made of the Apostolic teachings. "If the believer is thus dead to the law," it is sometimes asked, "if he is regarded as having already perfectly fulfilled it, and there is no more danger of his suffering its penalty, why is there not an end of all obligation and motive to obedience and holiness of life?" Let us not darken the gospel. There is an end of obligation as the condition of justification and life. And precisely here is the very marrow of the gospel. It is this which makes it "gospel"—the glad tidings of great joy to the tossed and driven heart. It is the fact that God can be just and justify the ungodly, that salvation is for sinners, that heaven is prepared for the wandering outcasts of shame and crime—it is this which comes down into human souls with a power of hope and peace that at once lifts the gospel out of and above all forms of legalism, all human schemes of reconciliation with God. This is the gospel—that we have not

to be holy before we can have hope in God—that we have not to be free from sin before we can look up and say, Abba, Father—that we have not to stand in unstained personal purity before we can lay our heads upon our Redeemer's breast, and feel the warm tears of His eternal love, and the throbbings of His sacred heart, and the power of His Almighty arms. This, let it be repeated, is the gospel; that it is the lost whom Christ came to seek and to save; the chief of sinners for whom He died; the prodigal son on whose neck the father falls and weeps, and for whom the doors of home are thrown open, and the festival day is kept.

Now does not the very statement of this character of the gospel silence the objection that it is the minister of sin? Is it said that if a man, by the death of Christ, is freed from the law, then he may sin as much as he chooses? The simple answer is this: he cannot choose to sin. When he comes out from under the law he comes under

the power of a life over which he himself has not control ; it is Christ's life, securing beyond peradventure obedience to Christ's law. A sinner cannot stand by the Cross of Calvary, and gaze upon the sinless Sufferer who hangs upon it, and mark the quivering lips which refuse the vinegar and the gall, and understand that all this is done and borne for him ; that the Lamb of God, amid darkening heavens and a rocking earth, is sinking under the burden of his crimes—and choose to sin. There is a law here which those who reason from grace to sin do not receive ; a law not of works, but of faith ; a law not of enforced compulsion, but of spontaneous love ; a law, too, which effects what no other law can effect—the soul's glad and accepted obedience. Tell us the gospel leads men to break the law ! It is the only thing that ever brings them to love and keep the law. The law can never secure its own keeping. It can command us ; it can threaten us ; it can punish us ; but there is one thing which it cannot

do : it cannot make us obey ; it can never make us holy. This is what the law cannot do in that it is weak through the flesh ; and this is what, therefore, God undertakes to do in another way, namely, by sending His own Son in the flesh. When a man, through the law, is dead to the law, then, and not till then, can he live unto God. And when, by the blood of Christ, he is thus set free from his bondage, and enters, with the full assurance of faith, into the privileges of the children of God, he is at rest. He has that Heritage of Peace which the world cannot give, and which it cannot take away.

Where then is the place for the believer's doubts ? Is the heart oppressed by the greatness, the holiness, the majesty of the Divine law ? But against all this it is his right to set the greatness, the glory, the grandeur of that perfect honor which, in the person of Christ, he has paid to that law. Is the soul overwhelmed by the vastness of its sins ? Against this let the be-

liever place the infinite and perfect satisfaction made for those sins when in Christ he died. Here is peace. Here is life. Through the law being dead to the law, the soul goes forth to live unto God, chanting evermore with the ransomed Church the mystic song of the Christian life : I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

I BORE with thee long weary days and nights,
Through many pangs of heart, through many tears ;
I bore with thee, thy hardness, coldness, slights,
For three-and-thirty years.

Who else had dared for thee what I have dared ?
I plunged the depth most deep from bliss above :
I not my flesh, I not my spirit spared :
Give thou me love for love.

For thee I thirsted in the daily drought,
For thee I trembled in the nightly frost :
Much sweeter thou than honey to my mouth ;
Why wilt thou still be lost ?

I bore thee on my shoulders, and rejoiced.
Men only marked upon my shoulders borne
The branding cross ; and shouted hungry-voiced,
Or wagged their heads in scorn.

Thee did nails grave upon my hands, thy name
Did thorns for frontlets stamp between mine eyes :
I, Holy One, put on thy guilt and shame ;
I, God, Priest, Sacrifice.

A thief upon my right hand and my left ;
Six hours alone, athirst, in misery :
At length in death one smote my heart and cleft
A hiding place for thee.

Nailed to the racking cross, than bed of down
More dear, whereon to stretch myself and sleep :
So did I win a kingdom—share my crown :
A harvest—come and reap.

C. G. ROSSETTI.



If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we
shall also live with Him.



CHAPTER III.

LIFE IN CHRIST.

THE union of the believer with Christ, as has been already said, is twofold ; it is representative or federal, and it is spiritual. It is a federal or representative union in that Christ, according to an eternal agreement or covenant with the Father, represents His people : He has stood in their place : He has obeyed the law and suffered its penalty in their stead. All that He did and suffered, He did and suffered as their representative head. His obedience, His suffering, His righteousness, therefore, is imputed unto them, or set to their account, as their sins were set to His account, and they are regarded and treated

as righteous, as He, standing in their place, was treated as a sinner. This is what the Holy Spirit so solemnly asserts when He declares that He who knew no sin was made sin for us that

we might be made the righteousness
¹ 2 Cor. v. 21 of God in Him.¹ It was the fulfill-

ment of the scene revealed to the prophet, when, through the vista of ages, he saw One led as a lamb to the slaughter, numbered

with the transgressors, that He might
² Isaiah liii. bear the sin of many.² It was as the
 representative Head of the promised

seed that His soul travailed in the offering for sin, that He bowed His head unto death, and made His grave with the wicked. He redeemed them from the law, from the curse, from death and from hell, by being made a curse for them. Of these, as His by the eternal covenant, the Redeemer says: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For these

He laid down His life.¹ For these as the gift of God out of the world—for these as embraced in the infinite love of the Father and the Son—for these as in the world, yet not of the world, the Redeemer prayed, that here they might be one, as He and the Father were one, and that hereafter they might be with Him where He is, that in the fulness of this mysterious union they might forever behold His glory.²

¹ John vi. 37
x. 15

² John xvii.

This union is spiritual in that it is effected by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As the various members of the body make one body because pervaded and animated by one soul, partaking of a common life, and united to one head, so Christ and His people are one through the indwelling of the one Holy Spirit, whereby all believers are united to Christ the Head. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13 are all baptized into one body.¹

Mysterious, then, as this union is, it is real. There is an actual, an omnipotent, a sacred joining of the person of the believer to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a consummation of that of which the holiest earthly unions are but types and symbols. In these yieldings up of weak and weary hearts to Christ, through all the ages of the Church's sojourn and struggle; in the acceptance of His pleading love, the rest within His arms, of every sinful, contrite soul, is the foundation of the marriage supper of the Lamb. The church is the Bride of Christ; nay, she is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.²

From this union, flows the Christian life; a life distinct from all the forms of natural moral energy, peculiar in its origin, its nature, its operations, and its results. The life in Christ must follow the death with Christ, as surely, and with as glorious a train of conse-

quences, as the resurrection of the believer's body must follow its sleep in the grave. He who dies with Christ must live with Him. He cannot help it. He lives, yet not he, but Christ liveth in him.

The Christian life, then, is not merely duty to be done ; it is a fact to be realized. It is not to be entered into, as thousands are striving to enter into it, by the pressure of obligation, but by the power of faith.

What, then, is the nature of this life ? You observe that the Apostle presents it in the passage which has suggested our line of thought—

1. As the life of Christ. It is His not merely as He is Lord of all ; nor even as He is peculiarly Lord of His redeemed. It is His in a higher and profounder sense. It is His own life flowing into, and through, His people. Their union with Him is not a fiction, nor a figure. It is real, and it is effective. While we bow with awe before the sacred mystery, we claim with faith all the ful-

ness of truth which the Spirit of God has both made and revealed. In Christ we are partakers of the Divine nature. Earthly relations may be lowly and obscure, as they certainly must be transient; but the humblest believer in Christ has entered into a relation, the highest as far as known to us of which created natures are capable, and as unchangeable as the Person of the Redeemer. To be a partaker of the Divine nature, to be a member of the Body of the Lord of glory, is a dignity which is never ascribed to cherubim or seraphim. This was an honor reserved for man—for fallen, corrupt, guilty, worthless man; to the praise of the glory of the grace wherein

God hath made us accepted in the

¹ Eph. i. 6 Beloved.¹

This is not a mere theory. It is a great practical truth; practical for action and for consolation. It presses us with the reflection that the life we bear about is a sacred life, to be dealt with sacredly, to be used devotedly. In realized

union with Christ it is lifted above the petty strifes and indulgences of time to a plane of higher existence and holier action.

Neither for its continuance here are we to be greatly anxious. It is Christ's life, dearer to Him than it is to us. While He needs it here, and as He needs it here, He will keep it here, to be reclaimed to Himself when and as He will. Shall He not do what He will with His own? Shall He not bear what He will in His own life? For what, after all, in their highest character are the believer's trials, but Christ's trials? What is the believer's poverty, but the Son of man again seeking where He may lay His head? What the believer's temptation and reproach and woe, but Christ's participation still in the unfinished struggles and tribulations through which the kingdom of heaven is won? Do we not know the deep meaning of the words: In all their affliction He was afflicted?¹ Do we not understand the blessed privilege

¹ Is. lxiii. 9

of filling up in our flesh that which
¹ Col. i. 24 is behind of the afflictions of Christ? ¹
Knowing that as the sufferings of
Christ abound in us, so our consol-
² 2 Cor. i. 5 ation also aboundeth by Christ? ² Why,
then, these profitless questions of God's
dear children: What shall we eat, and what shall
we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?
Why these failings and faintings of heart for
looking after those things which are to come
upon the earth? Why these convulsive clings to
the world of a life that is hid with Christ?
Ah! what a wiping of the tears of despondency,
what a quickening of tired and way-worn feet,
what a lifting up of hanging arms and heavy
hearts, what a throwing off of the incubus of sin
and woe, what a breaking through the fear of
death, and the darkness of the grave, when, by
the power of a living faith, the believer appre-
hends Christ in him, the assurance of grace, and
the hope of glory.

2. While this is the life of Christ, it is a life *in the flesh*. It has its course and manifestations in the body, and in contact with the corrupt nature. It is a life which, rising out of death, is still clogged by the elements of corruption. The believer, like Lazarus, at the voice of his Lord and by the power of his Lord, comes forth from the grave, but he comes perchance bound hand and foot with grave clothes. Nor while on earth, is he delivered from weakness or sin. The warfare after the flesh has, indeed, closed ; but the heavy walk in the flesh has no end, except in the tomb. Faintness, toil, temptation, anguish, sin, in the experience of all the children of God, demonstrate that while Christ lives in them, it is needful for His purposes that they abide for a season in the flesh. The life of Christ bound to the body of death, and continually crying, Who shall deliver me ? waits for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.

The struggles of the believer with sin, then, do

not prove him destitute of the Christian life. On the contrary, they are the evidences of that life. There is no contest with sin, with all sin, where the life of Christ has not been implanted. This struggle is not of the flesh, but of the Spirit. It is the power of a new and Divine life in contact and in conflict with the forces of spiritual death. It is the enmity ordained of old, and ordained to the end until the serpent's head is crushed.¹ In the bitterness of the struggle with sin and with temptation; out of the elements of the heart's sorest conflict; from the valley of humiliation where the darts of Apollyon pierce the head, and the hands, and the feet; from the darker valley of the shadow of death, amid flame and smoke and gloom, beset by fiends, bewildered by terrors, assailed by suggestions of sin, you may draw the arguments of peace. The way to the Celestial City, says Bunyan, lies through the midst of these scenes. When the Christian course is finished,

¹ Gen. iii. 15

the best that any believer can say is : I have fought a good fight. Blessed are they who shall come home scarred and worn and bleeding from the field. Blessed, thrice blessed, to whom it has been given not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake—to endure, to struggle, to die in the manifestation of the life of Christ in their flesh, and of the victory of that life over the flesh.

3. It is a life of *faith*. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. This is the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian. He is a believer. Things unseen are to him as real and controlling as things seen and tangible are to men of the world. The ground of his faith is the testimony of God. Accepting the Divine Revelation, he receives its declarations as decisive. This ends all questioning. Before mysteries high as heaven ; before difficulties over which it is easy to stumble into hell, he bows with the simplicity of a child. It is enough for

him if God has spoken. Mysteries are everywhere ; difficulties are everywhere. A man must have faith in something. He cannot live without it. The most pitiable object on earth, if we could conceive such an object, would be a being without faith. The bitterest infidel who ridicules the belief of Christianity must, nevertheless, have his own faith. The decisive character of the Christian faith lies not so much in its nature as in its ground and its object. Its ground is the Word of God ; its object is the Son of God. And whether there be not in these enough to justify that faith ; whether it be not wiser and safer to trust in the accredited testimony of the Scriptures though clouds and darkness be at times about them, than in the conclusions of a reason notoriously fallible even on the subjects that come within its proper sphere, and obviously incompetent to explore the region of truth covered by Christianity, or to give us any decision whatever in reference to the most urgent and momentous

questions of religion, let the issue decide. The highest deductions of the intellect of man are, after all, human. The truth on which the believer rests is Divine. Apart from the influences of sin, no issue could arise between the two. But where sin has entered, casting its blight over the human intellect, as well as the heart and the will—where its vast force has been centered to reverse all the normal relations between God and man, and to confound or obliterate all the truths touching those relations—where its grand and specific effect has been to alienate the soul from the life of God, and to fasten it in that alienation, to hide from it the truths, and motives, and the conditions of repentance and restoration—in other words, where the working of sin has been not only to blot out the truths of religion from the mind of man, but to cast his mind into a bitter and fixed antagonism to those truths even when they are supernaturally restored—there, to trust in the conclusions of the intellectual reason, as

against the revelation of God, in the tremendous questions of life and death, of eternity and of immortality—can anything be more unreasonable, and, if unreasonable, criminal? Of the character of God, of our relations to Him, of the possibility of reconciliation with Him, of the conditions of His favor, and of the issues of life and of death, of the soul's mortality or immortality, of judgment to come, and of the realities beyond the judgment—what can human reason do for us here? The question is answered by asking what she has done. Exclude from her conclusions the light she has borrowed from the Revelation over which she proposes to sit in judgment, and the result she has to offer upon these awful themes is but a mockery of the soul's demands. What God is in His being and character; what He is to us, whether a Creator and Sovereign and Avenger from whose dominion there is no flight, and from whose wrath there is no escape; or whether in the mystery of His nature, better things may be

treasured up for us ; whether there may be meditation, redemption, pardon, cleansing, restoration to the bosom and glory of God ; through what channel, on what terms, to what final issues ? these are matters beyond the province of reason. They belong to the domain of faith. They are received, if received at all, on the testimony of God. And the child of God—he in whom the life of Christ moves and reigns—does thus receive them. He accepts the Divine Revelation, not only as established by history, by prophecy, by miracle ; he accepts it because it burns with the light of its own Divinity ; because, with a power above nature it meets and satisfies all the demands of his moral being. Perishing with hunger, he here finds the bread of life ; guilty, he here finds pardon ; sinful, he here finds cleansing ; weary, he here finds rest. These things are not delusions. They are as truly and consciously the experience of the Christian life as hunger and cold, as sorrow and joy. The assurance of

pardoned sin, of sanctification, of peace with God, of consolation, support and rest coming into the soul from some source out of and above itself, are matters, not of theory, but of a blessed consciousness to multitudes. These are things which the world cannot give and which it cannot take away. And the Word through which these blessings flow to the soul, is known as the Word of God. As such it is received, believed, and obeyed.

Christianity asks no patronage of men. It opens wide the gates of the kingdom of God, and bids the weary and heavy-laden come; it makes welcome—eternally welcome—all who will; nay, it warns, it urges, it beseeches men to enter in; it tells of the wrath of God, and of the lake that burneth; it proclaims an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and fading not away; it speaks of joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth; it declares a God so loving the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have

everlasting life ;¹ it portrays a Redeemer bending in tears over the apostates whom He would have gathered under His wings, but they would not ; and yet, again, bending from the throne of His glory, to proclaim finally, before the volume of Revelation is closed forever : Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely ;² but to all, the condition stands unchanged and unchangeable : Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.³ This is the condition of life. The pride of intellect, the triumphs of philosophy, the boasts of science must be laid aside at the Cross of Christ. They have no place there. For after that, in the wisdom of God's permissive decree, and through the long struggling of ages, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.⁴ Here the Christian rests. He

¹ John iii. 16² Rev. xxii. 17³ Mark x. 15⁴ 1 Cor. i. 21

needs a Saviour ; he yearns for reconciliation with God, for purity, for peace, for home. These, philosophy, reason, science never gave, and these they never can give.

Let them hang their garlands upon the Cross ; let them bring their offerings to anoint the body of Jesus ; let them wait at the grave of the Nazarene, knowing that on the third day He shall rise again ; let them veil their faces as with a power above them all He comes forth from the grave, and ascends up on high leading captivity captive ; let them bow and join with every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying : Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon

the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever, and ever !¹

¹ Rev. v, 13

Thus baptized into the Christian faith, they shall partake of the Christian life, and their highest honor shall be that Christianity recognizes them, not as her

masters and judges, but as her servants and disciples.

Thus, and only thus, can philosophy and science take their true place. They have done much for which they have their honor and reward ; but they never revealed a Saviour from sin ; they never brought one of all earth's wandering prodigals home to his father's house ; they never led a crushed and broken-hearted sinner into the presence of God in peace ; they never forgave sin ; they never sanctified a soul ; they never breathed into the heart the assurance of God's unchanging love ; they never opened the gates of heaven to the passing spirit.

Turning from them all with their mockery of his deepest needs, the Christian flees to the Cross. He trusts in Christ. He believes and is saved. He does not see, he does not know, he does not comprehend, he *believes*. There are many things which are beyond his grasp, but he receives them, and is glad to receive them, like a

little child, on his Father's word. He has not seen his Lord; but this does not prevent his singing with the expectant host of God's elect: Whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.¹ Unsatisfied, possibly, yet deeming it enough that he shall be satisfied when he awakes in His likeness.

This is faith. It is the power of the new life into which the believer enters with Christ. Henceforth he walks by faith, not by sight; and the life he lives he lives by the faith of the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him.

O GLORIOUS Head, Thou livest now !
Let us, Thy members, share Thy life ;
Canst Thou behold their need, nor bow
To raise Thy children from the strife
With self and sin, with death and dark distress,
That they may live to Thee in Holiness ?

Earth knows Thee not, but evermore
Thou livest in Paradise, in peace ;
Thither my soul would also soar ;
Let me from all the creatures cease :
Dead to the world, but to Thy Spirit known,
I live to Thee, O Prince of life ! alone.

Break through my bonds whate'er it cost ;
What is not Thine within me slay ;
Give me the lot I covet most,
To rise as Thou hast risen to-day.
Nought can I do, a slave to death I pine :
Work Thou in me, O Power and Life Divine !

Work Thou in me, and heavenward guide
My thoughts and wishes, that my heart
Waver no more nor turn aside,
But fix forever where Thou art.
Thou art not far from us : who love Thee well
While yet on earth, in heaven with Thee may dwell.

G. TERSTEEGEN.



There came a voice from heaven saying: Thou art
my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.



CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD.

HUME, in discussing the principles of the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century, says that many of them in their opposition to the multiplied superstitions of Rome, "adopted an enthusiastic strain of devotion which admitted of no observances, rites, or ceremonies, but placed all merit in a mysterious species of faith," etc. This is, perhaps, as near the truth as we could expect one with the writer's bitter dislike to Christianity, to come in representing the living principle of the great Reformation.

While the Reformers did not reject all observances or ceremonies, and while they never

placed all merit in faith, they did have, as a vital element of their system, that which to Hume must have seemed, as it has seemed to many since, “a mysterious species of faith;” a faith without merit; a faith which is the gift of God; a faith which secures salvation perfectly and eternally, and, without which, to any capable of its exercise, there is no salvation.

Nothing is more remarkable than the inflexible precision with which Christianity, standing before men of all classes and conditions, announces its simple and ultimate condition: He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned. Before a condition so solemn and so tremendous, it becomes us to inquire reverently: What is this faith on which our salvation hangs?

Obviously it is not every kind of faith that can save the soul. It is not faith in Brahma or Mohammed. It is not faith in nature. It is not faith in humanity. It is not faith in an imper-

sonal God ; nor yet is it faith in the true God, such as the lost have while they tremble. It is faith of a peculiar and definite kind ; faith of which the Spirit of God is the Author, and the Son of God is the object. It is faith which saves, not as having all merit, or any merit, but simply as taking the salvation which God has provided, and which He freely gives.

The importance of this truth cannot be overestimated. At a time when, to so fearful an extent, the tendency is to confound all faith ; when a vaunted liberalism proclaims it of no vital consequence what a man believes, if he is sincere in his faith ; nay, when he is adjudged as irresponsible for his belief as he is for his complexion ; when the sentiment, if not the sentence, has its endorsement from professedly evangelical quarters, that “many a swarthy Indian who bowed down to wood and stone ; many a grim-faced Calmuck who worshipped the great god of storms ; many a Grecian peasant who did homage to Phœ-

bus-Apollo when the sun rose or went down ;
many a savage, his hands smeared all
over with human sacrifice,"¹ shall sit
down with Moses and Jesus in the
kingdom of God—it behooves us to know whether
there are not some clear, definite, living truths
never to be sacrificed, never to be compromised,
essential to the Christian system, and to the Christian
life. It becomes us to understand whether
God's scheme for redeeming, elevating, and saving
sinners, is as fixed and unchangeable in its
forms, terms, and issues, as it is full of grace and
glory. Unless the whole Christian system is an
ark of sand—unless its claims are as baseless as
those of the Vedas or of the Koran—unless its
promises are as hopeless, and its threatnings as
forceless as those of the Elysium and Tartarus of
heathen faith and fear—unless it is to descend
from the position where the faith of ages, and the
blessed experience of generations, have enthroned
it and bowed before it, and take its place side by

side with the thousand forms of religion whereby it has been blindly and wildly and vainly attempted to bribe the conscience to peace, and plant the soul in security—then its grand, peculiar and exclusive elements must be admitted.

It is a reversal of the whole nature and design of Christianity to remove its peculiarities. It *is* an exclusive system : it was designed to be an exclusive system. It does not share dominion with other religions : it claims universal and sole authority, or it claims nothing. When it entered the world, it did not ask a place by the side of Jupiter and Mars in the temple of the gods. It overthrew the temple, and trod the gods under its feet. Christianity is not *a* religion ; it is *the* religion. It is not merely a plan for restoring man to God, and delivering him from sin and death ; it is *the* plan, and there is no other. It is not one form of faith for saving sinners ; it is the only form. Beside the name of Jesus there is no other name given under heaven and among

men whereby they can be saved. He that believeth on the Son of God hath life : he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

It is worse than folly, then, to fritter away life weighing the comparative claims of Christianity ; it is worse than ignorance to undertake to patronize it ; it is infinitely below frivolity to dismiss it with empty compliments. For the recommendations of an Emerson or a Renan, it gives no thanks. It stands or falls by no such judgments. It has passed beyond the tribunal of Herod and of Pilate ; it has come down from the Cross ; it has gone forth from the grave, bearing in its hands life and immortality to scatter among the nations. Burning in the likeness of God, crowned with many crowns, yet clothed in vesture dipped in blood, it passes with these gifts of life, and love, and immortality, through the generations of men : it offers them without money and without price ; it makes welcome the chief of sinners ; it opens

the Paradise of God to the outcasts of earth ; it calls the weary and the heavy-laden to rest. But before the life and the immortality—before the Paradise and the rest of God, it plants the Cross of Christ. Pointing to the victim there, it proclaims : God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Pointing to the victim there, it cries : Behold the man ! And it announces as its unchangeable term and promise to each member of the apostate race : Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Christianity, then, shuts us up to a definite faith—a faith the reception of which is salvation ; the rejection, perdition. What is that faith ? The Apostle describes it : “ The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

The faith, then, that saves the soul, and sustains the Christian life, is faith in Christ—

I. AS THE SON OF GOD. It is faith in Him as sustaining a relation to God which involves participation of nature, and equality of power and glory. It is faith in His Divinity—not in the vague sense in which the proclamation of His Divinity becomes its annihilation; but in the sense which pertains alone to the only begotten of the Father, to that Word which was in the beginning; which was with God; which was God.

There have been few sadder scenes in the developments of human depravity than that in which the Son of man was betrayed with a kiss. It is remarkable that the most powerful and virulent opposition to our Christianity now comes shouting, Hosanna to the Son of David. The high-priest of our American pantheism condescends to the deliverance that: "One man [Jesus Christ] was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates Himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of

His world. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, 'I am divine, . . . would you see God, see me, or see thee when thou also thinkest as I now think.'"¹ And again we are ¹ R. W. Emerson told—and the language, with volumes more of a like kind, has a certain fascination for dreamy, sentimental souls—"To the poet, to the philosopher, to the saint, all things are friendly and sacred, all events profitable, all days holy, all men divine."

Renan thus closes his *Life of Jesus*: "This sublime person who, each day, still presides over the destinies of the world, we may call divine, not in the sense that Jesus absorbed all divinity, or was equal to it (to employ the scholastic expression), but in this sense, that Jesus is that individual who has caused his species to make the greatest advance towards the divine. . . . He was not sinless; he conquered the same passions which we combat; no angel of God comforted him save his good conscience; no Satan tempted him save

that which each bears in his heart. . . . But never has any man made the interests of humanity predominate in his life over the littleness of self-love so much as he. . . . There never was a man, Sakya-Mouni perhaps excepted, who so completely trampled under foot family, the joys of the world, and all temporal cares. He lived only for his Father, and for the divine mission which he believed it was his to fulfil. . . . Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing ; his legend will call forth tears without end ; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts ; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus." This patronage closes a book in which the Gospels are pronounced mere "legendary biographies," full of errors and inaccuracies—Jesus a mystic, with "no knowledge of the general condition of the world," and "the principle of whose power" was in "admirable errors"—who never

wrought a miracle—who was “irritated by obstacles, and by contact with men was reduced towards their level, and whose transcendant idealism never permitted him to have a very clear idea of his own personality.” “He was the Son of God, but (only as) all men are so, or may become so, in diverse degrees.”

“You may wish to know,” said a speaker in an address in which the name of Jesus of Nazareth had been used freely and with apparent reverence, “you may wish to know what I mean by Jesus of Nazareth. I mean the impersonation of political liberty!” And is this all? Is this the Christ of God? Is this the Christ the trembling soul needs in her darkness and desolation? When the sinner is agonizing with the question, What must I do to be saved? when the soul is sinking under the crushing weight of guilt—when she is struggling on alone in the hotness and weariness of life’s conflict—when she is breasting alone the waves of death, and human hopes give

way, and human stays fail, and she pleads for something sure and enduring on which she can rest, have we nothing higher to which we can point her, nothing more substantial, than some vague abstraction of speculative philosophy—an impersonation of political liberty?

These clear rejections of the common faith of Christianity in reference to the Person of Christ, are not to be found alone on the outer circle of unbelief. Divergencies from the faith as fundamental, because infinite, are found among those who apparently stand nearer the Cross and the Sufferer. "We can tell the orthodox," says one of the ablest and most scholarly of our modern Unitarians, "that our doctrine gives to us the same God whom they worship, and another

¹ G. E. Ellis. being, yes, a divine being besides."¹

Yet "the Deity of Christ" this writer earnestly rejects, and affirms for all Unitarians that Christ is not presented in the Scriptures "as an object of worship and prayer, or of our ultimate religious dependence."

These facts show that the struggle for Christian truth is something more than a contention about words. They make it perfectly plain that, under terms which shall throw inexperienced minds quite off their guard, may be concealed the bitterest hatred of the truth as it is in Jesus. The word Christ is one thing; the Person Christ is a very different thing: A man may honor the one and despise the other.

These facts show us, too, how unreasonable is the outcry against the creeds and formulas by which the Church has from the beginning guarded her sacred faith—formulas wrested from her through the successive ages, by the persistent encroachments and devices of error. The Church would have had no creeds save the Bible, if men had not arisen to pervert the words of the Bible itself, and thus to overthrow the whole structure of Christianity. Have we to go farther than the facts which are passing before our eyes to day, to show that it was impossible for the Church to

avoid giving a definite expression of her faith, drawn from the Word of God, in terms which should meet the perversions with which the Word itself was tortured and destroyed? What is a Christian? Obviously, a believer in Christ. The answer is true, and, as true, sufficient. Truly and practically given it binds together in one the whole body of the children of God. And here, it is said, we must stop; if a man says he believes in Christ, it is enough; you have no right to put him under explanations and distinctions and definitions. If by the term Christ all understood the same thing, the remark would have force. But when we see so palpably that the word may be made to mean anything—that in the mouth of one man it may mean the personal and eternal God manifest in the flesh, and in the mouth of another man it may mean a mere sign of an abstract fact—a symbol of civil liberty, how utterly absurd is the claim, that, concerning a man's relation to Christianity and to the eternal

hopes and promises thereof, we have only to ask if he believes in Jesus Christ. We have the right to know what he means by Jesus Christ; whether with apostles, and martyrs, and the Church of God, he means the incarnate Deity; whether with the accomplished Channing, he is accustomed to take the highest possible view of Christ consistent with the superiority of the Father; or whether, following the brilliant but fatal light which has lately gone out from New England, he dares preach a Christ, the natural and sinful son of Joseph and Mary! These things are not simply the looking at Christ from different points of view—they are looking at infinitely different things. The faith that moves around them is more diverse than the faith of seraph and of fiend; for devils confess that Christ is the Holy One of God. The faith with which Payson committed his soul to Christ in the hour of its deliverance, and the faith in which Theodore Parker lay down to die under the beautiful skies of

Italy, have almost nothing in common. The one reposed, after the weariness of his life's great work, in the arms of the Eternal Son of the Eternal God; the other—on what could he rest, to whom Christ was but his own weak and sinful fellow-sufferer?

It is not our purpose here to enter into an argument for the Supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ. We only say that, if Christ is not truly Divine, God has allowed the great mass of those who have planted their faith upon His Word, who have pleaded the promised guidance of His Spirit, and who have given proof, if proof can be given, of the enlightening, regenerating, and sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost in and over them, to live and to die in the specific sin which above all others, throughout the entire Revelation, is marked out and set apart, as the object of His intensest loathing, and the subject of His most wrathful condemnation—the sin

of idolatry.¹ Such a supposition, if the Bible and Christianity are worth anything, is incredible. If the history of the Church is a proof of the Divine origin of the Scriptures, to the same extent, and by the same force, is it a proof of the Deity of Christ. Who is this that, sending forth the shepherds of his scattered flock, dare say to every

¹ "What more than this do those men say who are for exalting the man Christ Jesus into the second person of an unknown Trinity—men whom you or I scruple not to call idolators?"—*Charles Lamb to Coleridge.*

member, as each takes his lonely way through the world: Lo! I am with you always? What life is that which abides in the innumerable multitude of the redeemed, so that, in every age and land, each as he rises from the death of sin, and goes forth in newness of life, can testify: Christ liveth in me?

The language and the life of the Apostle, as of all believers, proclaim the object of his faith. It was faith in One whom he could pray to, from whom he could seek the pardon of sin and all grace, into whose hands he could commit his soul

for the day of trial, and to whom he could ascribe glory and honor, dominion and power, now and forever. It was through this faith he lived, by it he suffered, in it he died—faith in a Divine Redeemer. Others must live by what power they may. He who lives the life Paul lived ; he who lives unto God as alive from the dead, lives through nothing less than this. Oh, if we had not a Redeemer-God ; if we did not know that the voice which called us from our deep corruption, and our bitter woe, was the voice of One who spake as never man spake ; if, in our inmost soul, we did not believe that the blood which is proffered to cleanse from all sin was the blood of the eternal Son of God ; if, in the final hour, with the death-mist around us, and the death-agony within us, we did not believe that He who hung upon the Cross all reddened with the blood of sacrifice, had the right, as Lord of Life, to say to us, as to the dying there, “To-day thou shalt be with Me,” then would we had never been born !

If you have sinned against man alone, bring forth your human mediator ; if your iniquity lies against angelic intelligences, trust in the mediation of angels ; but we who have sinned against God trust in no mediator less than God manifest in the flesh. Here, and here alone, do we find rest. The life we live, poor, weak, sorrowful, struggling, indeed, but such as it is, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

And there is a wonderful power in such a faith. In the weakness of humanity to know that over us, around us, within us, is Omnipotence ; in the darkness of life to know that the Light of life dwells with us ; in the daily toil, care, perplexity, temptation, sorrow, to recognize the Form that moves ever by our side, holding us in loving, unyielding grasp, to guide our steps, to bear our burdens, to temper our trials, to impart grace for temptation, and to breathe into our hearts the perpetual assurance, "I will never leave thee"—

under the crushing weight of sin, and the terrors of impending judgment, and the gloom of coming wrath, to know that He who shall sit as Judge, and award the wrath and the glory—without whose decree no curse shall fall, no crown be given—to know that He is with us, and for us—nay, that we are one with Him—that we cannot be condemned without His condemnation—that we cannot be banished from His presence because He dwells in us—that, in life, and in death, and beyond the grave, all things are ours, because we are Christ's, and Christ is God's—is there not here the power of a life above the world ; a life that hardly needs the rending of the veil to merge it in the life eternal beyond ?



LAMB, the once crucified ! Lion, by triumph surrounded !
Victim all bloody, and Hero, who hell hast confounded !
Pain-riven Heart,
That from earth's deadliest smart
O'er all the heavens hast bounded !

Thou in the depths wert to mortals the highest revealing,
God in humanity veiled, Thy full glory concealing !

“ Worthy art Thou ! ”

Shouteth eternity now,
Praise to Thee endlessly pealing.

Heavenly Love, in the language of earth past expression !
Lord of all worlds, unto whom every tongue owes confession !

Didst Thou not go,
And, under sentence of woe,
Rescue the doomed by transgression ?

O'er the abyss of the grave, and its horrors infernal,
Victory's palm Thou art waving in triumph supernal :

Who to Thee cling,
Circled by hope, shall now bring
Out of its gulf life eternal.

Son of Man, Saviour, in whom, with deep tenderness blend-
Infinite Pity to wretches her balm is extending, [ing,

On Thy dear breast,
Weary and numb, they may rest,
Quickened to joy never ending.

Strange condescension ! immaculate Purity, deigning
Union with souls where the vilest pollution is reigning,

Beareth their sin,
Seeketh the fallen to win,
Even the lowest regaining.

Sweetly persuasive, to me, too, Thy call has resounded ;
Melting my heart so obdurate, Thy love has abounded ;

Back to the fold,
Led by Thy hand, I behold
Grace all my path has surrounded.

Bless thou the Lord, O my soul ! who, thy pardon assuring,
Heals thy diseases, and grants thee new life ever during,

Joy amid woe,
Peace amid strife here below,
Unto Thee ever securing.

Upward, on pinions celestial to regions of pleasure,
Into the land whose bright glories no mortal can measure,

Strong hope and love
Bear Thee, the fulness to prove
Of Thy salvation's rich treasure.

There, as He is, we shall view Him, with rapture abiding,
Cheered even here by His glance, when the darkness divid-

Lets down a ray, [ing
Over the perilous way
Thousands of wanderers guiding.

Join, O my voice ! the vast chorus, with trembling emotion :
Chorus of saints, who, though sundered by land and by ocean,

With sweet accord
Praise the same glorious Lord,
One in their ceaseless devotion. [est ;

Break forth, O nature ! in song, when the spring-tide is nigh-
World that hast seen His salvation, no longer thou sighest !

Shout starry train,
From your empyreal plain,
"Glory to God in the Highest !" H. SCHWEIZER.



Greater love hath no man than this.



CHAPTER V.

CHRIST LOVING US.

IT is our sin and our misfortune that we fail to receive the fulness of Christian consolation through false or imperfect views of the complete system of truth which God has revealed for our salvation. To some minds there is a kind of conflict between the acts and ends of the different persons of the sacred Trinity. They look upon God the Father as sitting alone and afar off in the severity of His holiness, inflexible and unmoved by the wants and woes of sinners until He has been propitiated by the mediation of His Son. Now against this most unjust and comfortless view the Saviour Himself places the truth which

lies at the basis of Christian peace and consolation : God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And the Apostle shows the perfect harmony of heart and will between the Father and the Son when he says : The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, are no more truly one in substance, than they are one in the amazing love which has poured itself out in its fulness upon the sinful children of men. The love of the Father chose the heirs of life ; the love of the Son redeemed them ; the love of the Spirit renews and sanctifies them ; the love of All bears them on its mighty tide to eternal glory. God is Love.

We have seen that the Christian life rests for its support upon Christ as the Son of God. The life in Christ is sustained by faith in His true Divinity. This is the bread that came down from

heaven, which if a man eat he shall never die. To reject the Deity of Christ is to turn the bread of God into ashes. One may call the ashes bread ; nevertheless it is ashes. The faith that saves the soul, that plants it above the terrors of conscience, of law, and of judgment, that fills it with the peace of God here, and the assurance of His favor hereafter, lays hold upon a Divine Redeemer.

But faith in Christ as the Son of God is not the only source and support of the Christian life. Infinite grace has gone farther than this, and written our title to eternal rest in stronger and more affecting terms : *Who loved us*. We know, then—and it is the strength of our Christian life—not only *who* our Saviour is, but *how He feels* towards us. We know that He who meets us in our worthlessness and sin, and calls us to trust in Him, is not only the Son of God, but that He loves us. Our hope, therefore, rests not only on His power, but equally on His affection. His

character, as well as His Person, is committed to our salvation. We stand securely upon the perfect assurance given by His Omnipotence and His Love. And who shall measure us the depth of this? Who shall tell us the fulness of meaning in such terms as break upon us everywhere in the record of the Redeemer's life, and the testimony of His disciples? Greater love hath no man than

this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.¹ As the Father hath loved

me, so have I loved you.² Who shall

separate us from the love of Christ?—³

a love which passeth knowledge.⁴ In

every way, by His word, by His works, by His life, and emphatically by His death, has Christ given us the evidence of His unsearchable love towards us.

It is difficult to see what more He could do to demonstrate the greatness of His affection, to encourage faith, and to put to rest the doubts and fears of His disciples. Yet the most that many

believers seem to hope for is that the Son of God will not finally be angry with them : they hope not to perish by the way when His wrath is kindled. Escaping at last sin and hell, they are content to make the pilgrimage of life in darkness and tears. And in this darkness they appear to themselves, perchance, to honor the grace of God. To walk in light and joy seems to them presumption. Now Christian humility is a blessed grace, but it has no right to grow at the expense of Christian peace. It cannot so grow. That which does thus grow is not humility, but sinful despondency. The profoundest humility walks hand in hand with the sublimest faith. The grand harmony of their song, as they tread together the way of life is, "O wretched man that I am. . . . I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord !" ¹ Have you ¹ Rom. vii. 24, 25 never heard this song? In some lowly, poverty-bound hovel, where no consolations but those religion brings ever came, have ye never

heard the simple chant of the unlettered soul that had rested all things here :—

“ I the chief of sinners am
But Jesus died for me ?”

Or in some happier home where the grace of God which bringeth salvation had entered, and robed a great soul in the righteousness of Christ, have ye never heard, in the hour when the powers of the world to come were thronging, the humble and sublime confession, “ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief ?”¹

There is a very familiar truth, which, rightly understood and applied, would scatter the gloom in which so many of the children of God walk. The truth is this : Love does not necessarily depend upon the character of its object for its exercise. You, perhaps, if one of these fearful believers, are afraid to affirm that the Son of God has loved you, who are so unworthy. But

did you never reflect that love does not always stop to measure the worthiness of its object? Did you never hear, even in the moral wrecks of humanity, of an unworthy one being loved? Did you never see a mother receive home from the haunts of midnight vice, a worthless son? Did you never hear a father cry, in the breaking agony of a strong heart, "Oh, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!" Did you never hear of a wife, with heart riven and desolate, following to the shame and gloom of a prison, an erring husband—strong to go there in the strength of that mysterious love which is stronger than shame or death? And in such scenes, traversing our vision all along the plain of life, do you not see the dim finger pointing upwards to the world where all such love has its source and its sublimest realization? Things on earth are often types of things in heaven. If God has so made human hearts, that with love so deep, so strong, so pure, they may love the worthless, may it not be, that,

in the deep throbbings of His own sacred heart, there beats a love for the erring strong as omnipotence, pure as Divinity, enduring as eternity? If God has made that mother's heart so that it weeps and watches all the night hours away, waiting for the footsteps of the wandering prodigal, and when he comes not, bears her forth in the night-storm, to seek and save him; who shall say that there may not be love in heaven waiting to welcome home the wanderer on earth's dreary moor, reeling, plunging, falling in the midnight storm? And when he comes not—when, for the deep debauch of sin, and the maddening cup, and the song of fools, he seeks no purity of home or heart, who shall say that a Form of love shall not come forth from the burning gates, and bow to the haunts of earth, to seek and to save that which was lost? Who shall say that the Son of God may not love *me*, and give Himself for *me*?

But why do we darken the awful counsel of God? We know that these solemn possibilities

have become true. God *has* so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The Son of God has loved us and given Himself for us.

If you will consider further this love of Christ, reflect upon it for a moment as possessed by Him—

I. Before His Incarnation. It is most important to remember that the love of Christ is no new thing: it is an eternal love. It does not depend, therefore, for its existence or its strength upon anything in the possession or experience of its objects, farther than their wants and woes call it forth, and the intensity of those wants and the greatness of those woes give intensity and greatness to the love that bows to meet them. Jesus did not indeed love His people on account of their sins, but He loved them in spite of their sins:—

“He saw us ruined in the fall,
Yet loved us notwithstanding all.

This love is wonderfully set forth in the parable of the outcast infant: "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live When I passed by thee and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love

. . . . and I entered into a covenant
¹Ezek. xvi. 6-8 with thee, and thou becamest mine."¹

Why Christ loved us, is a question we may never be able to answer. The amazing and overwhelming fact is, that He did love us, even from eternity. He loved us in full view of all we were to be, of all we were to do. The sins of His people, therefore, are not new to Him; they do not take Him by surprise. All their wretched wanderings, their deep transgressions, their ingratitude, folly, weakness, unbelief—the thousand forms in which sin cleaves to them, and struggles for dominion over them—were all seen by Him before He came into the world to die for them: nay, they were the very things He came to die

for. If there were any possible development of sin or sorrow in the history of His people, which could prevent His love, it would have prevented it before its manifestation in the great mystery of the Incarnation.

But the love which pierced through the eternal ages—through the gloom of human apostasy—through the revolting accumulations of corruption and crime that gathered around the history of the race—through every individual peculiarity of weakness and of wickedness in its objects, and in the full foresight of all that was to be encountered of humiliation, of rejection, of agony, before its end should be accomplished—this is a love not to be arrested by the revelations of a wretchedness and guilt which were as open before it from eternity as they are to-day. What is there that should change the love of Christ? Its ground is in Him who is the same yesterday, and to-day and forever; its very nature is that it rests upon the worthless and the lost; its glory is that it

leaves nothing which it undertakes to do, undone. To the chief of sinners whom Jesus takes within His embrace, to the dying thief, to the friendless prodigal, to the polluted one from whose touch scribes and Pharisees shrink away, to the bloody persecutor, to every ruined transgressor whom He calls to Himself, and sprinkles with His sacrificial blood, His words are, as He breathes the grace of reconciliation into his heart, and plants the kiss of reconciliation on his brow: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."¹

¹ Jer. xxxi. 3

2. The manifestations of the love of Christ while He was on earth are so familiar that they will hardly be made more impressive by any detailed statement. His whole earthly history was one solemn act of love. The song that heralded His advent was a song of love. The star that stood over where the young child was, traced its pathway in characters of love. Love, love for the

lost, love for us, sustained Him through all the terrible sorrows and woes of His earthly life, and love brought Him to His early death. Mingled with the mournful pleadings of Gethsemane, we hear the voice : Herein is love. Over the Cross, beside the inscription of the governor, we see it written : Greater love hath no man than this. And as they bear His mangled body to the tomb we hear the broken wail of faith : Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, but God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. This is the great demonstration of love. On earth there is no greater. *There* where God provided for Himself a Lamb for a sin-offering ; there where all our iniquities were laid upon Him ; there where by His blood the hand-writing that was against us was blotted out, and our reconciliation with God was fully and forever sealed ; there where through darkness and anguish and

death, life and immortality were brought to light for us, we have the awful and the unanswerable proof of that love wherewith Christ loved us when He gave Himself for us.

3. And this love He has carried with Him into heaven. Many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it; the sting of death could not destroy it; the coldness of the grave could not chill it. Having loved His own, Christ loved them to the end. When He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, He bore with Him the eternal love which He brought from heaven, and which He carried through the earth, and through the grave. Yes, glorious thought! there is with Jesus to-day the same love that dwelt with Him before His Incarnation, and that sustained Him through all the humiliations, and sorrows, and the bloody tragedy of His earthly sojourn.

The love that listened to the tale of woe; the love that bore Him to the bier of the widow's son, and to the grave of Lazarus; the love that dis-

pensed pardons to the guilty, that lifted the burden from the weary, that gathered the children in its arms and blessed them, that spake a peace which the world could not give and which it could not take away, that promised life again to the dead in Christ—this is a love which still hangs over us, bathing us now with its gentle and blessed light, casting its rays over all the pathway of future years, and haloing with the brightness of immortality and the hope of glory the grave which is preparing for us.

This is the love wherewith Christ has loved us. It is the love of God, love for the worthless and the sinful, a love cherished from eternity, manifested in time, and sealed for its consummation in the eternity to come. Here faith draws her life. We have found a Redeemer-God. We have found that He has loved us, that He loves us still, and that He will love us as long as the offices of love are needed for our consolation here or for our glory hereafter. Through the darkness and

misery of our own feeble and changing affections comes the voice to which faith turns for strength and peace :—

“ Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above ;
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.”

This is the love, O sinner ! which still lives to plead with you. The love which yearned to gather the perishing under its wings ; which wept over the doomed and the lost ; which cast itself in blood athwart the path of the condemned, and proclaimed redemption through that blood for the guiltiest and most abandoned ; whose perpetual voice as it moved among the desolations of earth, was : Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest—this is the love which now hovers over you, and with all the fulness of grace, and all the mercies of God, and all the pleas of eternity, beseeches you to be reconciled to God. Is there nothing in this love to draw you within its heavenly power ? Is

there nothing in the glad and tearful chant of the Church on earth to the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us? is there nothing in the rapturous echo of the Church in heaven to Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood? is there nothing in the soft whispers of this love as it breathes down through the corridors of a past eternity? nothing in its grand reverberations, as, like the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings, it rolls along the arches of a blessed eternity to come—is there nothing in all this stealing over you, filling you, infolding you as in the bosom of God, to woo and win you to His Son? We might urge you by the terrors of the Lord. We rather beseech you by His love—by that love whose first movings were when God alone was; by that love which was manifest in the flesh; whose record is in Bethlehem, whose witnesses are in Gethsemane, whose seal is on Calvary. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His

Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Greater love hath no man, no angel, to offer you than this. If this wins you not, we must leave you reluctantly, mournfully, assured that if this Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

O LOVE, who formedst me to wear
The image of Thy Godhead here ;
Who soughtest me with tender care
Through all my wanderings wild and drear ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who e'er life's earliest dawn
On me Thy choice hast gently laid ;
O Love, who here as man wast born
And wholly like to us wast made ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who once in time wast slain,
Pierced through and through with bitter woe ;
O Love, who wrestling thus didst gain
That we eternal joy might know ;

O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, of whom is truth and light,
The Word and Spirit, life and power,
Whose heart was bared to them that smite,
To shield us in our trial hour ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who thus hath bound me fast,
Beneath that gentle yoke of Thine ;
Love, who hast conquered me at last
And rapt away this heart of mine ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who lovest me for aye,
Who for my soul dost ever plead ;
O Love, who didst my ransom pay,
Whose power sufficeth in my stead ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who once shalt bid me rise
From out this dying life of ours ;
O Love, who once o'er yonder skies
Shalt set me in the fadeless bowers ;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

SCHEFFLER.



Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away
the sin of the world.





CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST GIVING HIMSELF FOR US : THE ATONEMENT.

WE have seen that the faith which sustains the Christian life has, as its specific objects, Christ's Divinity and His Love. The life I live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me. The believer rests upon the foundation furnished by the Divine nature and the infinite affection of his Redeemer. But—reverently be it said—neither Divinity alone, nor love alone, nor yet both combined, could save a sinner from the wrath and curse of a violated law. The Divinity of God did not spare the angels that fell ; nor has His love broken the chains under which they are reserved in darkness to the judgment. Divinity cannot deny itself. Love cannot annihilate the

justice which binds sin and death necessarily and forever together. Love, to be effective, must go out of itself; it must *do* something, to reach and bless its object. Mere love, however ardent, could not meet the obligations of him, who, forasmuch as he had nothing to pay, was cast into prison. The deepest love of the mother who stands powerless by the stream in which her child is perishing, will not save the child. Love, and power, and righteousness must combine for the redemption of the sinner. God must be just whether He justifies the ungodly or not. It were better for the universe to perish than for the justice of God to fail; for the failure of His justice would be the destruction of His Godhead; and it were better for the universe not to be, than to be, under the dominion of a God not essentially just.

Can God be just *and* justify the ungodly? This was the question for Divinity and Love to answer. It was the question which was answered by the mediation of Christ. He gave Himself for us.

Thus divine, eternal love found its way to its objects. Thus the path was opened for God to be inflexibly just while justifying fully, freely, and forever the ungodly. He gave Himself, a Divine man, a mediator, a substitute, a sacrifice, for us.

Here faith finds its third great object and support—*Christ giving Himself in the place of His people*. We reach here the very heart of the gospel—the doctrine of Atonement; a doctrine, which to many, a stumbling-block; to many, foolishness, is, nevertheless, the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. Opening the profoundest depths of God's unfathomable love, while revealing the awful abyss of His eternal justice, it will stand to the end, as it has stood from the beginning, for the rise and the fall of many in Israel; the Rock of Ages on which hopes innumerable and full of glory shall rest as they have rested in the past, or a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence on which many shall stumble, and fall, and be broken.

Upon a doctrine so vital, our minds cannot be too often refreshed by a recurrence to the testimony of the Scriptures. To exhaust the evidence would be to exhaust the Bible itself. For what is left when you have taken away the record of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us? What remains for a believer to rest upon, or for a sinner to hope in, when you have removed the vicarious offering of the Son of God? Every victim that bled on the altars of the old dispensation spoke of Him : every prophecy of redeeming love pointed to Him : every type foreshadowed something of His great and glorious work. Ages before the Roman Cross was seen on Calvary, its type was lifted in the wilderness. Ages before the Son of man was a wanderer without where to lay His head, before He stood silent in the presence of His enemies, before His back was torn by the scourge, and His brow by the thorns, before the grave of Joseph of Arimathea opened to receive Him, the veil was lifted, and He was

seen as one despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: He was seen bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, led from prison and from judgment, to be cut off out of the land of the living, because all we like sheep had gone astray, and the LORD had laid on Him the iniquity of us

all.¹ And through the whole of that

¹ Isaiah liii.

waiting dispensation, this is the scene to which the eye of faith was ever directed, and on which the hopes of faith ever rested. The testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy.

But it is when we come to the new dispensation, and the veil of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom, that we are permitted to see the full meaning of Jewish types and shadows, and to learn, without the intervention of symbolic services, how God can be just and justify the ungodly. We see the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: we see, flowing from

the altar, the blood which cleanseth from all sin. We have passed beyond the times and the seasons of figurative premonitions. The fulness of time has come, when God has sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. This is no typical scene. The great reality for which all things have been waiting, and all things preparing, is before us. On the one side stands, not a guilty nation, but a ruined world: on the other, not a lamb from the flock, but the eternal Son of God. He is made of a woman; He becomes man; He is made under the law, subject to its claims and curse. Traveling in the greatness of His strength, He takes upon His arm the whole burden of His people's bonds and guilt, and giving Himself for them, He passes beneath the law, obeying in their place, dying in their stead. Thus He redeems them that are under the law, that they may receive the adoption of sons of God.

This is the obvious import of the life and death of Christ. He loved us and gave Himself for us.

Parallel with this are multitudes of Scripture passages. The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.¹ He gave Himself for our sins.² He gave Himself that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.³

¹ Matt. xx. 28

² Gal. i. 4

³ Titus ii. 14

That this gift was strictly vicarious and penal, appears further and abundantly in the manifold forms in which its results are stated.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.⁴

⁴ Gal. iii. 13

He who knew no sin has been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.⁵

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 21

He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree.⁶ The solemn depth of meaning in these declarations, the

⁶ 1 Peter ii. 24

Church has never been permitted to lose. While the Spirit who inspired them remains to guide her, she will never accept as their solution, the speculations of minds to whom the Cross is an offence. She will never account the blood of Christ as common blood. She will never believe His death a mere accident in His great work. She will never regard it as no more than a moral exhibition of Divine character. Her own conscious wants forbid it. The scene itself forbids it. While the Church retains the consciousness of sin, and the conviction of justice, she will never be satisfied with anything less than a real atonement for sin. Never, until she has forgotten the Person and the eternal glory of her Lord, will she accept the humiliation of Bethlehem, the agony of Gethsemane, the death on Calvary, as anything less than a true, vicarious, penal satisfaction to Divine justice for her guilt. She will never fail to testify in behalf of her Lord: He was delivered for our offences, and raised

again for our justification.¹ She will never cease to point to the coming Messiah, and say, Behold the Lamb of God.²

¹ Rom. iv. 25

² John i. 36

It is remarkable that all the manifold assaults, and all the secret treacheries against the Church's faith, have never succeeded in overthrowing her great symbols of doctrine. Even when a large part of the nominal Church has apostatized from her faith, and rejected her doctrines, they have not abolished her standards. These have been left, the legacy of previous godly generations, to pass over and inure to the benefit of generations to come. That many of the vital doctrines of Protestant Christianity are now rejected by professed Protestants, is undoubtedly true. The value of these doctrines, however, is not thereby diminished to true believers now, nor their power lessened for future ages.

Upon the doctrine before us, no standards are more clear and explicit than those of the early

churches of New England. Their Confession of Faith says : "The office [of mediator] the Lord Jesus Christ did most willingly undertake, which, that He might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have

borne and suffered, being made a sin
¹ ch. viii. sec. 4 and curse for us."¹ And, again :

"Christ by His obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified, and did by the sacrifice of Himself in the blood of His cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice

² ch. xi. sec. 3 in their behalf."²

This will be recognized as substantially the language of the Westminster Assembly upon the same subject. In agreement with this, the Synod of Dort says : "As we cannot satisfy [the justice of God] and deliver ourselves from His wrath, God, of infinite mercy, gave to us His

only begotten Son as a surety, who, that He might make satisfaction for us, was made sin and a curse on the cross for us, or in our stead. This death of the Son of God is a single and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; of infinite value and price, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.”¹ ¹ ch. ii. secs. 2, 3

These testimonies from the most familiar standards are sufficient to indicate the view which the evangelical Church has taken of the nature of our Redeemer's work when He gave Himself for us. He gave Himself to the assumption of our nature: He gave Himself to the law which bound that nature for obedience and for suffering: He gave Himself as a substitute and a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice for our sins: In a word, He gave Himself for the fulfilment of all things of all kinds for which His covenant people were under obligation.

This truth of Christ's vicarious offering gathers into itself the fullness of all that has preceded

it. It implies the true Divinity of the Offerer ; it involves His infinite love ; it presents both, incarnate, standing before the throne of God, pleading, weeping, struggling, dying, for sinners. Obviously, therefore, it is the great central fact of the gospel. As it is held or rejected, our part in the salvation of God stands secure or is lost. We were sinners before God : Christ, the sinless One, removed us, as it were, out of the way, and appeared in the presence of God for us. We had failed to obey the law ; Christ obeyed for us. We deserved to die : Christ died in our place. This obedience and death—this perfect righteousness of Christ—God accepts as if it were our own ; and we are accounted righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed unto us, and received by faith alone.

In the fearful dispensations of Providence, you have not far to search for an analogy to this feature of redemption. Indicated in the recent civil strife as one on whom the lot had fallen to stand

in the shock of battle, you procured your substitute. He appeared for you ; he answered for you ; he went for you ; he obeyed for you ; he endured toil, and suffering, and fatigue, and hunger, and thirst, and the weary night-watch for you ; he fought for you ; he fell and he died in your place. Your life was there. You live because he died. All men understand this, imperfect as the analogy is—far as it fails to illustrate the infinite love of Him who came for the very purpose of redeeming His people by His blood. Why then should they scorn as absurd the substitution of the incarnate Son of God ? Why should it seem a thing incredible, that when we were bound to a service whose bitterness was equalled only by its eternal peril, when we were involved in a struggle whose only issue was perdition, there should have appeared One to offer Himself to stand in our place, to answer for us, to obey for us, to suffer for us, to die for us ?

And why should it seem a thing incredible that

through that substituted service and sacrifice we should live? If, in the dispensation of God in human economies, the acts and the services of one may stand for the acts and the services of another, why, in the higher dispensation of His grace, may it not be possible that the work and the suffering of Him, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, shall stand for the work and suffering of a multitude that no man can number? If the life and the death of my fellow-mortal can equal my life and death, shall not the living and the dying of God manifest in the flesh be equivalent to the life and death of all His people?

This view floods with light the whole course of type and prophecy; it binds together the two dispensations as inseparable parts of one glorious scheme of redeeming love; it scatters the otherwise impenetrable darkness that hangs over the history of the mysterious Galilean.

Apart from the vicarious work of Christ, what

is the meaning of such plaintive words as break from lips which could, for others, command the winds and the waves to silence, and, by a word, bring forth treasures from the deep: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head? ¹ What is the meaning ¹ Matt. viii. 20 of that prayer from One who had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again: Father save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour? ² Why should He who had so often removed the cup of anguish and death from other lips, plead: If it be possible, let this cup pass from me? ³ Why did He ³ Matt. xxvi. 39 who had but to pray to His Father, and He would have given Him twelve legions of angels for a delivering guard, submit to be betrayed, arrested, smitten, tried, condemned at the hands of men? Why did He who opened Paradise to the malefactor at His side, and gave him

access to the immediate presence of God, cry :

My God, my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?¹ Why did He who saved others not save Himself ?

These questions cannot be answered if we deny the voluntary, vicarious work of Christ. These scenes all show us One who was not standing for Himself, who was not enduring for Himself, who was not dying for Himself. They show us One who was bearing our griefs, and carrying our sorrows ; who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. They teach us the solemn import of His own words, as, anticipating the hour of sacrifice, He testifies : I lay down my life for the sheep. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take

¹ John x. 15, 18 it again.²

This, then, is the gift of Christ for us. It is the presentation of Himself in our nature, as our representative and substitute, to

meet the claims of the law in our place, and to offer Himself as a sacrifice to Divine justice for our sins.

1. This is the distinguishing feature of the Christian religion. It separates it from every other form of religious faith. It separates it also from all modifications and perversions of itself. Other religions have their sacrifices, but the victim is not God manifest in the flesh. A nominal Christianity may recognize Christ, but deny that He died for our sins. This doctrine, therefore, is the object of assault from every form of error and heresy. The preaching of the Cross, in its full and Scriptural import, is as much an offense to-day as it was when proclaimed by Paul. Men will accept much if you spare them this. They will admit the claims of Christianity. They will bow at the name of Jesus. They will reverence the Church, and perchance trust in her to save them. They will contend earnestly for something

of the faith once delivered to the saints; but when it comes to the acceptance of Christ as the sacrifice for their sins—of His righteousness as the only righteousness in which they can appear before God—of His penal sufferings as the only ground of their deliverance from the eternal penalty of the law—immediately they are offended. What then? Shall the doctrine be yielded? Shall it be modified? Nay, but by so much the more it is rejected, so much the more, with the Apostle, will the true believer glory in it. His hope is here. His all is here. If this is taken away he has nothing left to struggle for, or to rest in. For,

2. This doctrine of the Atonement is that which alone brings the soul into lasting peace; for it is the only doctrine which shows how the sinner can be perfectly reconciled to God, and God to the sinner. We may contemplate Christ as an example of holiness, and be awed. We may follow Him with reverence as He goes about doing

good to the thankful and the unthankful. We may weep over His sorrows ; we may burn with indignation at the deep ingratitude which rejected Him ; we may look with amazement and grief upon the mournful mystery of His martyrdom ; but all this gives no rest to a sinful soul. Other men have lived to bless, and to be rejected by, their generation. Other martyrs have died in agony ; but this settles no question of peace between us and an offended God. The pure lives of martyrs cannot free our conscience from guilt, nor their blood cleanse us from sin. No more can the life and death of Christ, if His holiness be only an example, or His death an incident, or a moral lesson. But when we contemplate that holiness as moving before God for us—when we gaze upon that death as the death which stands in God's account in the very place of our eternal death—when faith can lay herself down upon the grave of Jesus, and understand that that grave has been filled for her, she rises, while with the

tear of contrition, with the song of a new life to the Son of God who loved her, and gave Himself for her. Here, here, where the shadows of the cross burst into brightness ; where, from the gloom of the sepulchre, life and immortality spring to light, the ransomed Church of God, age after age, gather, and stand, and sing : I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

BOUND upon th' accursèd tree,
Faint and bleeding, who is He ?
By the eyes so pale and dim,
Streaming blood, and writhing limb ;
By the flesh, with scourges torn ;
By the crown of twisted thorn ;
By the side so deeply pierced ;
By the baffled, burning thirst ;
By the drooping death-dew'd brow :
Son of man, 'tis Thou ! 'tis Thou !

Bound upon th' accursèd tree,
Dread and awful, who is He ?
By the sun at noon-day pale,
Shivering rocks, and rending veil ;
By earth, that trembles at His doom ;
By yonder saints who burst their tomb ;
By Eden promised, ere He died,
To the felon at His side ;
Lord, our suppliant knees we bow ;
Son of God, 'tis Thou ! 'tis Thou !

Bound upon th' accursèd tree,
Sad and dying, who is He ?
By the last and bitter cry ;
The ghost given up in agony ;
By the lifeless body laid
In the chamber of the dead ;

By the mourners come to weep
Where the bones of Jesus sleep ;
Crucified ! we know thee now :
Son of man, 'tis Thou ! 'tis Thou !

Bound upon th' accursèd tree,
Dread and awful, who is He ?
By the prayer for them that slew,—
“ Lord, they know not what they do ! ”
By the spoil'd and empty grave ;
By the souls He died to save ;
By the conquest He hath won ;
By the saints before His throne ;
By the rainbow round His brow :
Son of God, 'tis Thou ! 'tis Thou !

MILMAN.



My Beloved is mine, and I am His.



CHAPTER VII.

PERSONAL APPROPRIATION OF CHRIST — ASSURANCE.

BLESS the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless His holy name ! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits ; who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.¹ ¹ Ps. ciii. 1-4

This glad song of thanksgiving, rising from the temple service of the old economy, the Christian believer catches and sets to the clearer and sweeter notes of the new dispensation. In it he sings of Christ's redemption. While chanting sin forgiven, and life redeemed,

and mercy shown, and strength renewed, the song is unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood ; and so, singing praises, faith goes from strength to strength, until she appears before God in Zion.

The Christian life drawing its support from Christ, the Son of God, loving us, and giving Himself for us, is not a life of gloom or doubt. The faith which rests upon Christ is permitted to rest upon Him as a definite and personal Saviour. His love is not a vague and general love. His gift of Himself was not indefinite or uncertain.

That He shall see of the travail of

¹ Isaiah liii. 11 His soul and shall be satisfied ;¹ that all whom the Father gave to Him shall come to Him ; and that of those who

² John vi. 37 come none shall be cast out,² are facts that no reverent believer in the Divine Word will question. He who never trifled in the use of language must have meant something when He said : "I lay down my life for

the sheep.”¹ What He meant would hardly seem to admit of doubt. “Ye believe not,” He says to others, “because ye are not of my sheep.”² And He seals the whole with these impressive words: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”³

¹ John x. 15² John x. 26³ John x. 27-29

Can this language fairly be made to mean less than that the eternal love and gift of God, and the death of Christ are no peradventure? that they refer to definite objects, and are linked with infallible results? The awful sacrifice of the Son of God was no theatric scene enacted for a common impression upon a gazing world; nor was it an event which merely threw open a door of vague hope to the race. It was a

tragedy too real and too tremendous to close in uncertainty. Something was settled by it. Something was made sure to those for whom so vast an offering had been made. A solid foundation was laid for those strong assurances of coming glory which throb in the Apostle's heart, and burst from his lips, and flow from his pen when he touches the great theme of Christ's redemption. He knew whom he believed. The love on which he reposed was no indefinite love. That which from eternity had burdened the Redeemer's heart, which had bowed Him to the earth, which had sustained Him while the crushing weight of His people's guilt was laid upon Him, he knew could not now forsake those for whose salvation it had waited so long, and borne so much. If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more
being reconciled, we shall be saved by
¹ Romans v. 10 His life.¹ This is the unanswerable argument of Apostolic faith. There

is no wavering or questioning. The price of our reconciliation has been paid in the bitter anguish and death of God's own Son. The work is done. The Atonement is finished. We shall be saved.

You have not failed to observe the still more strictly personal form of the Apostle's faith. The Son of God loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*: not the world, not even the Church, not us, but *me*.

And who is this who dares thus claim, without a doubt, personal participation in the love and sacrifice of Christ?

Recall for a moment another scene:

When the first of the long line of witnesses who have sealed in blood their testimony to a risen Saviour, was slain, you remember who was standing by consenting unto his death, and keeping the raiment of them that slew him. And you remember who went forth from that scene, drunk with its spirit, to make havoc of the Church, and entering every house dragged men and women to prison.

You recall his own confession : Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, and when they were put to death I gave my voice against them, and I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceeding mad against them, I perse-

¹ Acts xxvi. 10-11 cuted them even unto strange cities.¹

And this is the man who coming with his hands red, and his sword dripping with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, cries, as he casts his weapons before the Cross : The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me. There is an argument here which the repentant persecutor takes care not to lose : For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe

² 1 Tim. i. 16 on Him to life everlasting.² His argument is this : If Christ could love me, who is there that He may not love ? If Jesus whom I hated, Jesus whom I persecuted, and

with the blood of whose saints I was drunk, could have mercy on me, if He could love me, and forgive me, and save me, and make me heir of His heavenly glory, even when I was in the very act of smiting Him in the person of His disciples—who is there among all the apostate children of men so lost and sunken that this mercy may not reach him and save him? Who, coming out of this mass of human corruption, and guilt, and woe, may not look up to this burning firmament of eternal love, and say: The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me?

It was a familiar remark of the great Reformer that the pronouns are among the most precious words of the Bible. They are also among the most precious words of common life. There is a great difference between the expressions *a* father, and *my* father. The one can be used by the most sad and desolate orphan; the other is crowded with associations of love, and home, and protection. It is one thing to look up with the phi-

losopher to the glories of a star-lit sky, and say : There is a God ; it is a very different thing to look through and beyond all this, and say : This God is *our* God forever and ever. It is one thing to say to Jesus of Nazareth : I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God ; it is another and a very different thing to say to Him : *My* Lord and *my* God.

“Read,” says Luther, “with great vehemency these words, ‘me,’ and ‘for me,’ and so inwardly practice with thyself that thou with a sure faith mayest conceive and print this ‘me,’ in thy heart and apply it to thyself, not doubting but that thou art of the number of those to whom this ‘me’ belongeth ; also, that Christ hath not only loved Peter and Paul, and given Himself for them, but that the same grace also which is comprehended in this ‘me,’ as well pertaineth and cometh unto us as unto them.”

It was, at one time, a question warmly discussed in the Church, whether assurance was es-

sential to saving faith ; that is, whether in all true faith one must be assured that Christ had died for him in particular, and that his sins were forgiven. The affirmative of this would appear to be held still by some whose judgments are entitled to weight in the Church. The view, however, in this strong form, does not seem sustained either by the Scriptures or by general Christian experience. In spiritual, as in temporal things, it is possible that I may have an interest in that of which I have not yet the full assurance. *That* faith certainly is Scriptural which receives and believes all that the Scriptures reveal. Now the Scriptures do not reveal the fact that Christ died personally and particularly for me, and that my sins are forgiven. But they do reveal the fact that He died for an innumerable multitude of sinners just *such* as I am, and that the sins of all who believe in Him are forgiven. So that if I as a sinner go to Christ as a Saviour, believing in Him as He is revealed in the gospel, then I may

know that He has died for me, and that my sins are all forgiven. The conclusion, however—a most blessed and consolatory conclusion—is one of logic, rather than of direct faith. Christ died personally for every one who believes in Him. I believe in Him, faith testifies; therefore, Christ died definitely and personally for me—my sins are now pardoned—I am a child of God, and an heir of eternal life—my Beloved is mine, and I am His—what shall separate us? neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come.

While we admit that the power to say this clearly and intelligently may not be essential to the existence of saving faith, we must still claim it as necessary to the completeness of that faith. If the Scriptures do not make assurance of an interest in Christ indispensable to the Christian life, they certainly present it as the precious privilege of that life. Nay, that life cannot be fully entered into, and made manifest to the world in its power, and excellence, and loveliness, until the believer

is able to say with the Apostle: The life I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

Now that such assurance is attainable is evident, first, because it has been attained. Paul could say: I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.¹ He knew that neither death ^{1 2 Tim. i. 12} nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature could separate him from the love of God which was in Christ Jesus his Lord.² ^{2 Rom. viii. 38-39} He could affirm without faltering: The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me.

“I behove,” said Rutherford—it was when he was summoned to the bar of Parliament to answer to the charge of high treason; at the same time God had kindly sent *His* messenger to call

His servant home ; “ I behove to answer my first summons, and ere your day arrive I will be where few kings and great folks come.” And, again : “ I shall sleep in Jesus, and when I awake I shall be satisfied with His likeness.”

It was the testimony not merely of his dying hour, but of his life. Open his letters anywhere, and you shall find them dated, perhaps, from “ Christ’s palace in Aberdeen ”—his place of imprisonment—and you shall read everywhere something like this : “ Our Lord handleth us as fathers do their young children. They lay up jewels in a place above the short arms of bairns, else bairns would put up their hands, and take them down, and lose them soon. So hath our Lord done with our spiritual life. Jesus Christ is the high coffer in which our Lord hath hid our life. We children are not able to reach up our arms so high as to take down the life and lose it ; it is in our Christ’s hands.” “ I know that His comforts are no dreams. He would not put His seal

on blank paper, nor deceive His afflicted ones that trust in Him."

"Open to me the eighth chapter of Romans," said the aged Bruce, as the death-angel suddenly darkened his room, and his sight failed; "Open to me the eighth chapter of Romans, and set my finger on these words: 'I am persuaded that neither life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Is my finger there?" "Yes." "Now God be with you, my children, I have breakfasted with you. I shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night."

These are summoned, almost at random, from a great cloud of witnesses who have had no more doubt of their personal interest in Christ than they had of their own existence. What grace did for them through faith, it may do, and is doing, and will do for others. The changing generations of believers look to One who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.

That such assurance is attainable would seem to follow again from the very nature of the gospel. What is the gospel? As marked off from the law, and from all things else, it is the "glad news" of salvation for sinners. It assumes that all men are lost, are dead in sin. Wherever it comes, it comes to men as sinners. To all who hear it, it presents the basis of a complete deliverance. Its summons is: Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. Wherever there is a man who hears the sound of the gospel, unto him it comes with its glad tidings of great joy. He may not accept the tidings; he may not enter into the joy; but the tidings are there claiming his ear, and the joy is there claiming his heart.

We do not here cross the path we have already traveled. We admit, and bow before, the perfect sovereignty of God. We admit that every successive step in the great plan of redemption is of grace; and that no step, therefore, places God

under any obligation to take another. Apart from Himself, none can question His right to arrest the processes of His love at any point that He may please.

A provision in its very nature ample for all, and suited to all, and secured to all who accept it, imposes no obligation upon God to give a disposition to accept it to men who naturally reject it. He may give that disposition or not; He may give it to whom He pleases—if, in His infinite grace, He will go so far, and not only provide redemption, but constrain its acceptance—and we can only say: Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All this we admit, and more. We veil our faces and adore before the sublime harmony of the Father's eternal love, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's regenerating grace.

But it still remains true that the whole grand and glorious tenor of the gospel is this: Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the

¹ Isaiah xlv. 22 earth.¹ The commission given by the great Redeemer, after the sacrifice which laid the foundation for it, was : Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature : He that believeth—whoever he may be, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, young or old, moral or monstrous, the least of sinners or the chief of sinners, no matter who, or where, or what —He that believeth, and is baptized

² Mark xvi. 15 shall be saved.² On the strength of this commission, we come to every soul that wears the fallen human form, and say to that soul, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou, *thou* shalt be saved. Wherever we can find a man from whom the image of God has been blotted out by the fall—wherever we can find one through whose veins rushes the ceaseless tide of sin, in whose heart the undying worm has begun to gnaw, over whose head hangs the flashing wrath of God, under whose feet heaves a burning hell—wherever, on the throne of judgment or

in prisoner's cell, in kings' councils or in slaves' shackles, in halls of learning or in dens of brutal vice—whenever, in the first flush of morning life, or in the last fading of its sinking light; when the dew of youth stands on the fresh, warm brow, or when the storms and griefs of life have gnarled and knotted all its lines of grace—wherever and whenever, the wide world over, we find a child of Adam, sunken in Adam's sin, accursed in Adam's curse, groaning beneath the thralldom of the universal woe, there and then we come with the glad message of life through the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; there and then we proclaim Redemption, full, free, eternal, through the blood of the Lamb.

And every man that receives this message in its simplicity and its sincerity, hath eternal life; not *shall* have it when the present struggle shall have closed, and death shall have been swallowed up in victory. He hath it now. United to Christ by a living faith, he enters at once and forever

into participation in His imperishable life. In the very first act of believing, he becomes an heir of all the blessings of Christ's redemption. He becomes one with Christ. He passes from death unto life. He enters the state where there is now no condemnation.

Now if this is the very nature of the gospel; if, the moment a sinner turns to Christ as a Saviour, and rests in Him, that moment he does, in the nature of the case, enter into eternal life, receiving a full and changeless pardon for all sin, and, though still a sinful and unworthy one, is made by God's rich grace, a child of God and an heir of heaven, what—if he does but apprehend the gospel—what is to forbid him entering into the full assurance of faith? What is to forbid him saying, that moment, and ever after: The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me? Possibly, probably, some to whom this question may come will hardly have thought of such assurance as a thing attainable by them. They have

a hope that they are the children of God, that Christ died for them, that their sins are blotted out; and this "hope is an anchor;" it keeps them from drifting; but it does not bear them with full sails, and joyous songs, and leaping heart, on to the kingdom of heaven. And why not? If you are a child of God why should you not know it? Is God willing you should be a child, and not willing you should know it? Is He who has secured pardon for you so freely, and at such a price, reluctant to testify to you the greatness, and preciousness, and certainty of His sacred gift? Oh, believe it not! Be assured that He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, shall with Him also freely give us all things.¹ ¹ Rom. viii. 32

Do not doubt that He who loved you enough to die for you, loves you enough to warrant you claiming part in His redeeming work. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitia-

¹ 1 John iv. 10 tion for our sins.¹ And this is the record : That God hath given to us
² 1 John v. 11 eternal life, and this life is in His Son.²

This is the wonderful, but simple truth on which faith rests. And resting here, neither the vicissitudes of life, nor the solemnities of death, nor yet its own great weaknesses and imperfections can deeply disturb the believing soul. To have this faith is to have Christ. And to have Christ is to have all things. It is to be possessor of a redeemed and regenerated manhood ; it is to be heir of God's eternal love ; it is to go out and to come in through all life's changes under His protecting wing ; it is to rise in the morning and to rest at night circled by His benediction—blessing richer and sweeter than our poor faith apprehends ; it is to have the black and dreary sky of our woes riven by a Divine light ; to know, in the darkest hour of our human griefs and perplexities, that all things are working together for our good. And when the last

comes, and whatever there is painful or fearful in the breaking up of earthly relations and proving the hidden verities of eternity, is upon us, faith casts the final challenge to Death—

“ Looking to Jesus with a steadfast eye,
Clad in His righteousness, my robe divine,
Come ! for thy boasted terrors I defy ;
Poor, harmless, shadowy phantom, HE is mine ;
My life is bound in HIS, whose living Word
Cries that the dead are blest, when dying in the Lord.

“ I see Him shining on His throne of light—
The Lamb that hath been slain, and slain for me—
The King of glory ! of all power and might,
The Lord and God, by whose most high decree
The vile, the guilty, trusting in His name,
A dying wretch like me, eternal life may claim.”

And now is it still asked : How can these things be ? We answer, first, and last, and evermore, by a more simple and childlike faith. There is a world of meaning in the Saviour's words : Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You go to yonder Asylum, and adopt an orphan as your own.

He is without father, without mother, without friend or home in the world. He has no claim upon you ; possibly may be quite unworthy of your care. But you take him to your home, you clothe him, you supply his wants, you tell him that henceforth your home is his, you are his parent, he is your child. He believes you ; he lives with you as your own ; he serves you as your own ; he partakes of your table, and sleeps under your roof, and calls you “ father,” without a doubt of his right so to do. But suppose he should go out and sleep in the fields, and feed on husks, and come now and then and look in at your door, and hurry away frightened at his own presumption. You ask him what all this means. He replies : “ Alas ! I am a miserable orphan ; I cannot be your child ; I have no right to call you ‘ father,’ or to take these gifts as my own.”

“ What has all this to do with it ? ” you reply : “ I adopted you because I chose to ; not because you had any right to the adoption. I have

made you my son, and all you have to do is to believe it, and to act according to it."

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, adopted in Christ Jesus, not for our own worthiness ; but "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." This is the mystery of Divine grace ; but why should we reject it ? If it has pleased Him whose substance we have wasted in riotous living, to meet the prodigal afar off, and to bring him home with tears and songs of joy, who are we that we should transact the folly of fleeing from His roof to rest under the clouded, stormy sky of unbelief ? of turning from His table ever spread, and to which we are ever welcome, to feed on ashes ? Why deny the love that has sought us, and redeemed us, and is most honored when it is most freely taken by the most unworthy ? The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me. This is the demonstration of the believer's eternal safety. There can be no greater. If the Son of God spared not Himself that He might redeem me,

surely He will spare nothing less for me now that He has redeemed me. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress ; my God ; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence ; He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust ;
His truth shall be thy shield and buck-

¹ Psalm xci. ler.¹

· This is the faith that breaks our chains. It sets us free. From the curse of the law, from the bondage of corruption, from the power of death, we rise the Lord's freemen. We live, yet not we, but Christ liveth in us, and the life we live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God who loved us, and gave Himself for us ; and life itself becomes henceforth a glad and ceaseless doxology unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father :

to whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen !¹

¹ Rev. i. 5, 6

This life ! is it not, after all, the only life worth living ? The life by faith upon the Son of God ; faith in His Deity ; faith in His humanity ; faith in His love ; faith in His atoning sacrifice for our sins ? Such a life cannot be without great results. It works by love, and purifies the heart. It strengthens and it sanctifies. It breaks through the incrustations of selfishness and worldliness, and opens the whole nature to the workings of a Divine power. No man can possess this life without being a nobler and a better man here, and having in the very possession the pledge and power of an endless life hereafter.

It is then a life that we are justified in commending with all the earnestness of conviction and of love to those who are yet without it. Unless the whole gospel is a fiction, and its hopes a delusion, no words more momentous or more im-

perative can challenge attention than these : Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you. . . . I am the bread of life ; he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth

¹ John vii. 27, 35 on me shall never thirst.¹ Surely in the famishing need of our humanity, it were worth while to prove the truth of this promise, and to prove it while it tarries.

The gift of God is eternal life. Vast and amazing as this gift is, it will never be repeated. There will be no second Bethlehem or Calvary. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. If this is lost, all is lost. The time is too short ; the interests at stake are too solemn to make it wise or safe to trifle or to tarry. God is in earnest. Such a gift has not been made in vain. The Divine counsel waited long before the blood of the eternal Son was shed, but when it was shed, infinite issues were opened by it. Like the malefactors,

the race thenceforth hung on the right hand and on the left of the Cross of Christ ; some to cry : Remember me, and to enter into Paradise ; some to mock and to perish.

POOR trembling lamb ! Ah, *who* outside the fold
Has bid thee stand, all weary as thou art ?
Dangers around thee, and the bitter cold
Creeping and gnawing to thy inmost heart ;
Who bids thee wait till some mysterious feeling,
Thou knowest not what—perchance may never know—
Shall find thee where in darkness thou art kneeling,
And fill thee with a rich and wondrous glow
Of love and faith ; and change to warmth and light
The chill and darkness of thy spirit's night ?

For miracles like this who bids thee wait ?
Behold, " the Spirit and the Bride say, come,"
The tender Shepherd opens wide the gate,
And in His love would lead thee gently home,
Why shouldst thou wait ? Long centuries ago,
Thou timid lamb, the Shepherd paid for thee.

Thou art His own. Wouldst thou His beauty know,
Nor trust the love which yet thou canst not see ?
Thou hast not learned this lesson to receive,
“More blest are they who see not, yet believe.”

Still dost thou wait for feeling ? Dost thou say,
“Fain would I love and trust, but hope is dead ;
I have no faith, and without faith who may
Rest in the blessing which is only shed
Upon the faithful ? I must stand and wait.”

Not so. The Shepherd does not ask of thee
Faith in thy faith, but only faith in Him ;
And this He meant in saying, “Come to me.”
In light or darkness seek to do His will,
And leave the work of faith to Jesus still.

THE END.

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